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CALUMET-SAG CHANNEL BRIDGES  
I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor  
Calumet-Sag Channel  
Blue Island Vicinity  
Cook County  
Illinois

HAER No. IL-121

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 37127  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

CALUMET-SAG CHANNEL BRIDGES  
I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor

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HAER No. IL-121

Location: Calumet-Sag Channel, Blue Island  
vicinity  
Cook County, Illinois

UTM: 16 E.442800 N.4611170  
Quad: Blue Island

Date of Construction: ca. 1935; rebuilt 1964-65

Builder: Unknown

Present Owner: Unknown

Present Use: Railroad bridge

Project Information: The Illinois and Michigan Canal was  
designated a National Heritage Corridor  
in 1984. The following year HABS/HAER  
embarked on an extensive inventory and  
documentation project of the 100-mile  
length of the corridor. Field work for  
this project was concluded in 1987.  
Final editing and photographic  
documentation was completed in 1992.

Historian: Frances Alexander, 1986.

The Calumet River area was first developed in 1869 with the hopes of encouraging industrial development. In 1874 the Calumet River was straightened at the harbor for a width of 300' and a depth of 18'. Six miles were opened for industrial sites. When the Sanitary and Ship Canal was being built, the Sag valley-Calumet River depression was opened as a feeder to the canal. In the late 1920s the feeder was widened into a 60' wide channel and highway construction over the channel followed. However, the railroad and highway bridges required an even wider channel and in 1955 construction of a 200' channel began. All concrete bridge abutments date from the later widening. The channel was completed three years later at a cost of \$125 million. The anticipation of creating a major freight commercial corridor never realized its full potential, and, one by one, the heavy metal industries closed.

All five bridges are identical to one another and employ double tracks, except for the center bridge, which has only a single track. The Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad and the Baltimore & Chicago Terminal Railroad rail bridges are adjacent to each other on the western side of the group, while the three bridges to the east are the property of the Grand Trunk Western Railroad. The bridges are steel, fixed span through bridges with Pratt trusses. Members are connected by riveted gusset plates with plates and angles forming I-beams. There are concrete piers and abutments. Each bridge has one main span about 200' long. Bridges have concrete retainer walls and fenders. There is a concrete culvert west of bridges on north bank.

**SOURCES:**

E. J Kelly, "Construction of the Calumet-Sag Channel,"  
Engineering News 69 (23 January 1913): 146-50.

Calumet Sag Waterway Opposed," Railway Age 91 (November 14, 1931): 740-42, 757-58.